

Winston started the tradition of providing area youngsters with the moral precepts that they would need to grow into law-abiding adults.

The members of the First Baptist Church of Sheepshead Bay have long been known as innovators and beacons of good will to all those with whom they come into contact. Through their dedicated efforts, they have each helped to improve my constituents' quality of life. In recognition of their many accomplishments on behalf of my constituents, I offer my congratulations to the First Baptist Church of Sheepshead Bay on the occasion of its Centennial Anniversary.

CENTRAL NEW JERSEY CONGRATULATES JOHN STEMLER III, EWING KIWANIS POLICE OFFICER OF THE YEAR

HON. RUSH D. HOLT

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 6, 1999

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize John Stemler III of Ewing Township, who is being honored by the Ewing Kiwanis Club as the Police Officer of the Year on Friday, May 7, 1999.

This award is bestowed upon him by his peers in recognition of his constant willingness to go above and beyond the call of duty.

In February of 1994, he began his employment with the Ewing Police Department as a Communication Operator. After graduating from the Trenton Police Academy Basic Training Course, he was sworn in on August 16, 1994.

After being sworn into office, Officer Stemler was assigned to the Patrol Bureau where he rose to become a Field Training Officer. Officer Stemler is also a member of the Police Department Tactical Response Team. He has excelled with many letters of commendation for his outstanding work as a police officer.

Officer Stemler is a graduate of the Ewing Public School system and a lifelong resident of Ewing Township.

Mr. Speaker, Officer Stemler is a great example for Central New Jersey. I ask all my colleagues to join me in recognizing him.

INTRODUCTION OF THE YOUTH VIOLENCE PREVENTION PACKAGE

HON. PETER A. DeFAZIO

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 6, 1999

Mr. DeFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to introduce legislation today to help combat the growing problem of youth violence in America. I began this effort last year in response to the needs identified following shooting at Thurston High School, in my hometown of Springfield, Oregon.

This legislation is designed to prevent youths from turning to violence by providing adequate crisis intervention and support services and to limit opportunities for troubled kids to obtain firearms. Politicians talk a lot about helping kids, but when it comes to putting money on the table, programs that invest in our children continue to go underfunded. We

must do better, or we will continue to see tragedies like those in Littleton, Springfield, Jonesboro, Edinboro, West Paducah, and Pearl. My package will boost funding for prevention and intervention programs that have a proven track record for helping at-risk kids and families in crisis.

Following the Thurston shootings, community leaders, educators, law enforcement and medical professionals as well as Thurston students and their families worked to develop an action plan identifying several grant programs that address specific needs in our communities. However, to develop new initiatives using these grants, or to expand existing programs, an increase in overall funding is essential. This package would provide this much needed funding for services to foster strong and healthy children, families and communities.

The causes of youth violence are extremely complex and there is no panacea. This package doesn't include everything communities may need, but it certainly addresses some of the key concerns our community has identified.

Youth Violence Prevention Act:

Increases funding for early childhood intervention programs such as Head Start.

Increases funding for juvenile justice delinquency prevention programs including court schools.

Increases funding for child abuse prevention programs focusing on community-based family preservation and crisis intervention programs.

Expands the National Guard's successful Youth Challenge program for troubled high school dropouts.

Provides incentive grants for states to implement a 72-hour hold for juveniles caught with a firearm on school grounds.

Authorizes expansion of the instant criminal background check system so a person who sells a firearm but is not a licensed dealer can check to see if a prospective purchaser is eligible to purchase a firearm.

Provides for a tax credit of up to \$250 for the purchase of safe storage devices for firearms.

Requires manufacturers to provide trigger locks for all purchases of new firearms.

Requires safe storage of firearms.

MY SERVICE TO AMERICA

HON. COLLIN C. PETERSON

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 6, 1999

Mr. PETERSON of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, each year the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) and the VFW Ladies Auxiliary conducts the "Voice of Democracy" broadcast script writing contest. This years contest theme was "My Service to America". It is my pleasure to announce today that Bria Knorr, from Moorhead, Minnesota, is one of fifty-four national scholarship winners. Ms. Knorr reminds us that the spirit of service to our country remains strong among our nation's youth, and that individuals can make a difference. At this point, I'd like to enter Ms. Knorr's essay into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

MY SERVICE TO AMERICA

(By Bria Knorr)

3,536,341 square miles, 2,807 miles from sea to shining sea, and populated by 270 million

people. It's America and it's big. So large, in fact, that many people find it incomprehensible to think they could serve a country of such vast dimensions. It causes a person to wonder whether or not they can make a difference in a community of so many. However, if we page backwards through the history of our country, we find countless examples of single individuals changing America forever through their dedicated service.

One such man, traveling across the country as a doctor for Native Americans and settlers moving west was John Chapman. He is more commonly associated with the trail of apple trees he left where ever he went. To this day we hear of slightly legendized tales of the heroic self-sacrificial acts of a man committed to helping settle this great nation. Not only was he serving America in the eighteenth century, but also the many generations who would come to love his apple trees and his legends.

Another guide, traveling south and north rather than east and west, embodied the idea of advocating a principle through the liberation of peoples. Under the cover of darkness Harriet Tubman repeatedly risked her life to bring slaves out of servitude and into freedom. Her development of the underground railroad improved the lives of hundreds of runaway slaves.

The powerful motivator and leader, Dr. Martin Luther King Junior, chose to serve his country by speaking out against the hypocritical idea that all men were created equal but should not be treated that way. Through peaceful protest, this passionate man drew the attention of the country to the injustice of segregation. His service did not end when his life did, but goes on through the idea of equality he brought to the United States.

Single individuals can and have made a difference throughout the course of our history. But these greats are few and far between. Most of us never have the opportunity to render our services on such a scale. Are we worthless to our country? How can we serve this nation, this body of people?

I'd been regulating pumps for six hours and now it was in the dead of night; the purring of the pumps and the swish of water being mopped down the drain droned on monotonously as it had all night. When my family and I had gotten here, this couple had been manning their pumps 'round the clock for four days just to keep the rising flood waters from filling their basement. Their cistern would fill and need to be pumped out every fifteen minutes and water was running into the room through cracks in the cement floor. I was tired and uncomfortable and the air was cold. One more hour and my shift would be over. My thoughts drifted upstairs to the exhausted couple who were getting the first real sleep tonight that they'd had in days. I thought that tonight I might have been home in my warm bed. Instead, I was in a clammy basement, fighting off sleep to flip a switch every fifteen minutes and mop up water that would cover the floor just as soon as you finished pushing the last batch down the drain. I thought of Dr. Martin Luther King Junior, of Harriet Tubman, of John Chapman. I wasn't aiding anyone to freedom, I wasn't risking my life for an ideal, I wasn't improving the United States on a grand scale. But maybe this was grand for these people whose home I was protecting. I was doing something grand for some small part of the country. Perhaps that is what defines my service to America. For what is one foot in the 5,280 that make up a mile? Except that it wouldn't be a mile without it . . .